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UNCLAS VATICAN 004231

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (DEAN), EUR/PD/PA, AF/C, DRL/IRF

FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 132/01

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: VATICAN VERBATIM

1. THE AUGUST 04 - 10 EDITION OF NEWS AND VIEWS FROM  
VATICAN CITY.

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- ARCHDIOCESE SAYS RWANDAN PRIEST "NOT HIDING FROM JUSTICE"

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RWANDAN PRIEST "NOT HIDING FROM JUSTICE"  
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2. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF FLORENCE CLAIMS A  
RWANDAN PRIEST ACCUSED OF GENOCIDE IS NOT HIDING IN ITALY  
AND HAS NOT RECEIVED FORMAL NOTIFICATION OF CHARGES AGAINST  
HIM. THE SPOKESMAN SAYS FATHER ATHANASE SEROMBA HAS CEASED  
TO OFFICIATE AT PUBLIC LITURGICAL RITES BECAUSE OF  
"ASPHYXIATING" MEDIA ATTENTION. FATHER SEROMBA IS APPARENTLY  
READY TO "EXPLAIN" HIS SITUATION AND RESPOND TO ALL  
ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM, "IN THE PROPER FORUM WHEN HE IS  
REQUIRED TO DO SO." THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "THERE IS SUSPICION  
THAT SOME PEOPLE MAY BE INTERESTED IN HARMING THE CHURCH IN  
RWANDA." AFRICA RIGHTS, A LONDON-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP,  
FIRST REPORTED ACCUSATIONS OF GENOCIDE AGAINST SEROMBA.  
ITALIAN MISSIONARY NEWS AGENCY "MISNA" TOLD REPORTERS THAT  
AFRICA RIGHTS' ACCUSATIONS SHOULD BE DEALT WITH CAUTIOUSLY  
BECAUSE ETHNIC TUTSI RWANDANS WHO ARE CLOSE TO THE CURRENT  
REGIME IN KIGALI" FOUNDED THE ORGANIZATION. (NOTE: MISNA IS  
NOT A VATICAN NEWS AGENCY. END NOTE). MERANTE

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